DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 236 958 HE 016 304

AUTHOR Watkins, Beverly T.
TITLE Universities Moving to Raise Quality of Education Schools.
PUB DATE 7 Sep 83
NOTE 3p.
PUB TYPE Journal Articles (080) -- Information Analyses (070)
JOURNAL CIT Chronicle of Higher Education; v27 n2 p1,14 Sep 7 1983

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Improvement; Higher Education; Literature Reviews; *Preservice Teacher Education; Program Descriptions; *Schools of Education; *Teacher Education Programs; Teacher Effectiveness; Teacher Improvement
IDENTIFIERS PF Project

ABSTRACT

Many colleges and universities are trying to improve both the quality of their education school's curriculum and the caliber of the students they enroll. In the last five years, 85 percent of the schools have taken some action in this direction. Some examples are: (1) the University of South Carolina has eliminated undergraduate degrees in education and increased in-class and field experience requirements; (2) the University of Florida has developed a five-year program called "Proteach"; (3) the University of Southern Maine has begun a program designed to give people who want to change careers the opportunity to become teachers; (4) Jersey City State College has just completed an immersion program in which students spent five semesters in inner-city schools; (5) Towson State University has completed a program in which consultants are trained to conduct writing workshops for classroom teachers; and (6) the California State University system has tightened the entrance and exit requirements for its schools of education. (DC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

THE CHRONICLE
of Higher Education.

September 7, 1983
Volume XXVII, No. 2

V27 n2 p1, 14

'HOTTEST ISSUE OF THE DAY'

Universities Moving to Raise Quality of Education Schools

By BEVERLY T. WATKINS

Stung by recent criticism of the way they train schoolteachers, many colleges and universities are trying to improve both the quality of their education schools' curricula and the caliber of students they enroll.

Criticism of teacher education has increased substantially since the National Commission on Excellence in Education and several other groups issued reports last spring decrying the condition of public education. The reports recommended reforms in the way schoolteachers are prepared.

"Teacher education is the hottest issue of the day in the United States. It has put us in a quandary about where to go next," says Margaret Marston, a member of the Virginia State Board of Education who served on the National Commission.

"There are many reasons for the poor quality of our teachers," she acknowledges. "They come from groups with the lowest S.A.T. scores. Salaries are dismally low. Good teachers leave the schools after several years for more pay or better jobs or because they have no authority in the classroom or because they get weary."

While "we don't know exactly what to do," says Ms. Marston, "we might demand more rigor from the teachers' colleges."

85 Pct. Have Made Changes

Many of the 1,300 higher-education institutions with teacher-education programs have already made some changes. A survey conducted last year by the National Center for Education Statistics indicated that, during the last five years, 85 per cent of the schools of education had taken some step to improve their offerings. About 75 per cent had tightened their entrance requirements.

A few institutions have undertaken substantial reforms. Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College merged their schools of education last fall to eliminate duplicate programs and improve the overall quality of their offerings. The University of California at Berkeley, the University of Michigan, and other institutions are currently revamping their entire programs after a series of cuts and administrative changes. A few institutions, including

Continued on Page 14, Column 1

Quality

Continued from Page 1

Duke and Case Western Reserve Universities, have discontinued teacher education.

On most campuses, deans and directors of teacher education are taking another look at their admission and "exit" standards, which still allow many students with weak academic preparation to become teachers.

Scrutinizing the Curriculum

Educators are also scrutinizing the curriculum, which tends to be heavy on theory and skimpy on practical experience, for better ways to prepare students for the "real" world of the classroom.

They are re-evaluating "in-service" or continuing-education programs, which critics call irrelevant and inadequate.

Although teacher educators are not sure which of their efforts—if any—will help solve the problems, they have begun to try a variety of things. For example:

► The University of South Carolina has eliminated undergraduate degrees in education and moved the education courses into the college of arts and sciences. Students will be mathematics or history or English majors and receive their degrees in those subjects.

Requirements for prospective teachers have been increased from 120 to 138 credit hours and now include more mathematics and foreign-language training. Potential elementary-school teachers must complete 18 credit hours in an academic subject taught in elementary school. For students planning to be secondary-school teachers, the requirement is 24 hours.

The amount of field experience has been increased 20 per cent.

Following the change, the number of freshmen interested in teacher education more than doubled—from 64 last year to 132 this fall, says John D. Mulhern, dean of education.

ED236958

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Martha E. Dudrow

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
✓ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

HE016304

► Beginning next fall, the University of Florida will offer a five-year degree program called "Proteach," which David C. Smith, the dean of education, describes as "a sweeping departure" from traditional teacher-training programs.

To develop the curriculum, he says, faculty members asked three basic questions: What should beginning teachers know? What should they be able to do? What kind of people should they be?

From the answers, faculty members devised the expanded program, which will include general and professional studies, an academic specialization, clinical experience, and practice teaching. Graduates will receive a master's degree in elementary, secondary, or special education.

► The University of Southern Maine has just begun an experimental six-month program that offers people who want to make a career change an opportunity to become high-school teachers.

The first 16 students, selected from among 60 applicants, have completed a six-week session with courses in educational theory and other traditional subjects. They are working this fall as interns in Portland's secondary schools. In January they will be certified to teach in Maine's high schools.

The experiment was designed with high-school reform in mind, says Loren W. Downey, dean of education. "These students are socially committed people who have become discouraged about their ability to influence society through the usual channels," he says. "When they enter high-school teaching from another career, they will be interested in improving the condition of the schools. They understand that a quick fix is not enough. They will be strong participants in long-term change."

► Jersey City State College has just completed a five-year program in which students, beginning in their sophomore or junior years, spent five semesters studying and working full time in the public schools.

The program, which began in 1977, was designed by faculty members and students in the School of Professional Studies and Education—together with elementary-school teachers—to provide a total immersion for potential teachers in the inner-city schools.

The curriculum included special courses treating culture shock, racial prejudice, and urban social situations. Faculty members were assigned full time to the schools to instruct the students and supervise their practice teaching. Students either graduated from the program as "professional teachers" or "got a taste of what teaching is really like and selected themselves out," says Janice R. Boone, associate dean of education. The program, which is now being revised, also became "a shelter workshop for education faculty members, who have re-thought their perceptions of the inner-city schools," she says.

► Towson State University has just completed a three-year project in which 75 "teacher consultants" were trained to conduct writing workshops and seminars for classroom teachers. Each year since 1981, the college of education has selected 25 experienced writing teachers to participate in a five-week summer institute, improve their teaching skills, and become consultants or "master teachers."

"The best teacher of a teacher is another teacher," says Gloria Neubert-Loudermilk, co-director of the program, which is modeled on the Bay Area Writing Project in California. Because the approach was so successful, she says, some of the teacher consultants offered a similar program last summer for 50 elementary- and secondary-school students who were aspiring writers.

► The trustees of the California State University system recently approved a policy that, among other things, calls for the 19 campuses to make admission to education programs more rigorous, to require teacher candidates to demonstrate competence in subject matter and basic skills, and to develop a two-step teaching credential with a provisional certificate for beginners and a full professional credential for experienced teachers. Many campuses have begun to implement the recommendations.

The new systemwide policy "places the schools of education in a good position to implement things we have long wanted to do. Now we have a mandate from the top," says Ernest F. Garcia, dean of education on the San Bernardino campus.

Reaction to Calls for Reform

Teacher educators differ in their views about current responses to the call for reform in their field. Some think their programs are getting more than their share of criticism. Others worry that changes, while they may be necessary, are being made too quickly.

They say some reforms are superficial, affecting only the structure of programs and not the content, which is where the problems lie.

"Teacher education has become a scapegoat for all that is wrong with education," says Anne Flowers, dean of education at Georgia Southern College and president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

"As professional educators, we recognize the inadequacies of some of our programs," she says. She adds, however, "With the declining quality of our applicant pool, we have made a significant effort to improve our recruiting."

Norene F. Daly, director of teacher education at Madonna College, cautions that "the redesign of teacher education must not be a revolutionary process but an evolutionary process."

"We must not react too quickly to our critics," she says. "We must make sure that changes have their foundation in the knowledge base and are not just a quick fix."